

COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN for the BLUE RIDGE AND AMITY MINE SITES  
Prineville, Crook County, Oregon

Prepared by  
Ochoco National Forest  
P.O. Box 490  
Prineville, Oregon 97754

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For additional information, contact:  
Ochoco National Forest  
Public Affairs  
(541) 416-6647

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN  
BLUE RIDGE AND AMITY MINE SITES, PRINEVILLE, OREGON

## I. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

This community relations plan identifies issues of community concern regarding the Blue Ridge and Amity Mine sites on the Lookout Mountain Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest and outlines community relations activities to be conducted during the engineering evaluation/cost analysis (EE/CA) phase of site remediation. In general, community concern about the site is low; having known for many years that the sites were a source of mercury, residents more or less accept their presence in their community.

The start of remedial activity at the sites, however, may awaken the concern of the community. An effective community relations program for these sites should, therefore, prepare for this potential growth of community interest and attempt to educate, without alarming, residents so that they can better understand the remedial process.

This community relations plan has been prepared to aid the Ochoco National Forest in developing a community relations program tailored to the needs of the Prineville community, and the residents downstream from the affected sites. The Ochoco National Forest conducts public involvement activities to ensure that the public has input to decisions about planned activities and is well informed about the progress of those actions. These sections follow:

- Capsule Site Description;
- Community Background;
- Highlights of Program;
- Techniques and Timing;
- References; and
- Appendices

The information in this plan is based primarily on information gathered during the Motherlode Mine remediation project which occurred in 2000. The "Blue Ridge and Amity Mines Site Inspection Report," prepared by contractor, Cascade Earth Sciences Ltd., and the paper "An Ecoregion Approach to Mercury Bioaccumulation by Fish in Reservoirs," by Susan Allen-Gil, Duncan Gilroy, and Larry Curtis of the Oak Creek Laboratory of Biology at Oregon State University, also provided valuable information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service has responsibility for managing this Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis for the Blue Ridge and Amity Mines. The Ochoco National Forest Office of Public Affairs will oversee community relations activities at the sites.

## II. CAPSULE SITE DESCRIPTION

The Blue Ridge and Amity Mines are located in Crook County within Section 15, Township 14 South, Range 20 East, Willamette Meridian. Figure 1 illustrates the location of the site within the state, and surrounding geographical landmarks. The site is in the Ochoco Mining District approximately 34 miles east of Prineville in the Ochoco Mountains. Figure 2 illustrated the location within the Ochoco National Forest and surrounding geographical landmarks. It is in the jurisdiction of the Lookout Mountain Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest.

The site is located at the northern base of Lookout Mountain, and immediately west of Big Summit Prairie, at approximately 5,000 feet above mean sea level in the Johnson Creek drainage. Johnson Creek is a secondary drainage that flows through the Amity Mine site, immediately south of the Blue Ridge Mine site, and into the North Fork of the Crooked River approximately six miles southeast of the mine sites. The North Fork of the Crooked River is the main drainage for the area and flows into the Crooked River, upstream from the Prineville Reservoir and Bowman Dam. Surface and underground mining, and ore processing, took place on the mine sites. Signs warning of potential risks associated with the mines are posted at the mine sites.

The Blue Ridge Mine site consists of the Number One Mine and the Blue Ridge Mine. The Amity Mine Site consists of the Amity Mine and the Devils Food Mine. The Number One Mine was consolidated with the Blue Ridge mine. The Devils

Food Mine was a small prospect located near the Amity Mine. Both of these sites were included in the Site Inspection report.

#### Blue Ridge Mine

Mercury was discovered in the Johnson Creek area in 1929. The Blue Ridge Mercury Company (BRMC) was organized to operate the mine (Shaft #2) in 1930. A furnace and kiln were erected for processing the ore.

From 1931 to 1938, the property was leased and owned by a variety of companies and individuals. In 1938, C.T. Takahashi acquired the property and through the Central Oregon Quicksilver Mines, Inc., operated the mine until 1941. The Number One mine (Shaft #1), adjacent to the Blue Ridge Mine was operated by the Number One Mining Co. and a variety of owners from 1930 to 1941. During this time, shafts were sunk on both mines to approximately 100 to 110 feet.

In 1941, both the Blue Ridge Mine and the Number One Mine came under the ownership of the Cinnabar Mines, Inc. In 1942, a 75-ton Gould rotary furnace and condenser system was installed on the site, producing 93 flasks of mercury over the next two years. In 1944, the furnace and equipment were removed from the site. From 1952 to 1959, Roy Stanton owned the property and leased to a number of individuals. From 1959 to 1995, Frank Reid worked and operated the Blue Ridge Mine. Additional information is available in the Site Investigation report (CES, 2001).

#### Amity Mine

The site was established in 1929 by W. J. Wesserling. From 1930 to 1932, the Johnson Creek Mercury Company leased and developed the property, producing 250 flasks of mercury. In 1933, the property reverted back to W. J. Wesserling. In 1937, the ownership transferred to Homestake Mercury Mines, during which time 4 adits were excavated. From 1937 to 1950, 24 flasks were produced under several different companies. In 1949, a Herreshoff furnace was installed. In 1953, the lease was taken over by the Ochoco Mining Company and operated until 1956, producing 129 flasks. In 1958, the Herreshoff furnace and retort were removed from the site. Two owners are recorded from 1960 to 1980, with no additional development noted.

The mine site included 4 adits, a glory hole and a 50 deep shaft. Two of the adits are under the current Forest Road 42 and two are depressions on the hillslope adjacent to the furnace and structures. There are several large waste piles on the site. Additional information is available in the Site Investigation report (CES, 2001).

#### Devil's Food Mine

The Devil's Food Mine prospect, also known as the Westbrook prospect, consists of a series of trenches and collapsed adits. The site was located by Robert Osborne and J. H. Shelton in 1932. From 1933 to 1943, it was owned by William Endicott, producing 1 flask during this time. In 1957, trenches were bulldozed under a Defense Minerals Exploration contract.

Previous investigations completed at the site include a Preliminary Assessment (Cascade Earth Sciences, Ltd., 2000), a Site Inspection (Cascade Earth Sciences, 2001). For both Blue Ridge and Amity mine sites, the results of the evaluation indicated that the final list of human health and ecological COCs consist of arsenic and mercury.

At the Amity Mine Site, the on-site surface water appears to be impacted. The water sample collected from Johnson Creek contained mercury and lead concentrations greater than the ODEQ freshwater chronic criteria, however the water sample collected from an adit on site, did not exceed ODEQ freshwater chronic criteria standards. The assumption is that the on-site water is entraining mercury and lead enriched sediment from the surrounding soil and waste piles.

The cumulative result of these site investigations allowed for the development of a conceptual site model for the Blue Ridge and Amity Mine Sites. The primary sources of contamination at the Blue Ridge Mine Site are:

- The open pit which exposes the cinnabar ore body; and
- The historic ore processing activities which occurred between 1929 and 1995.

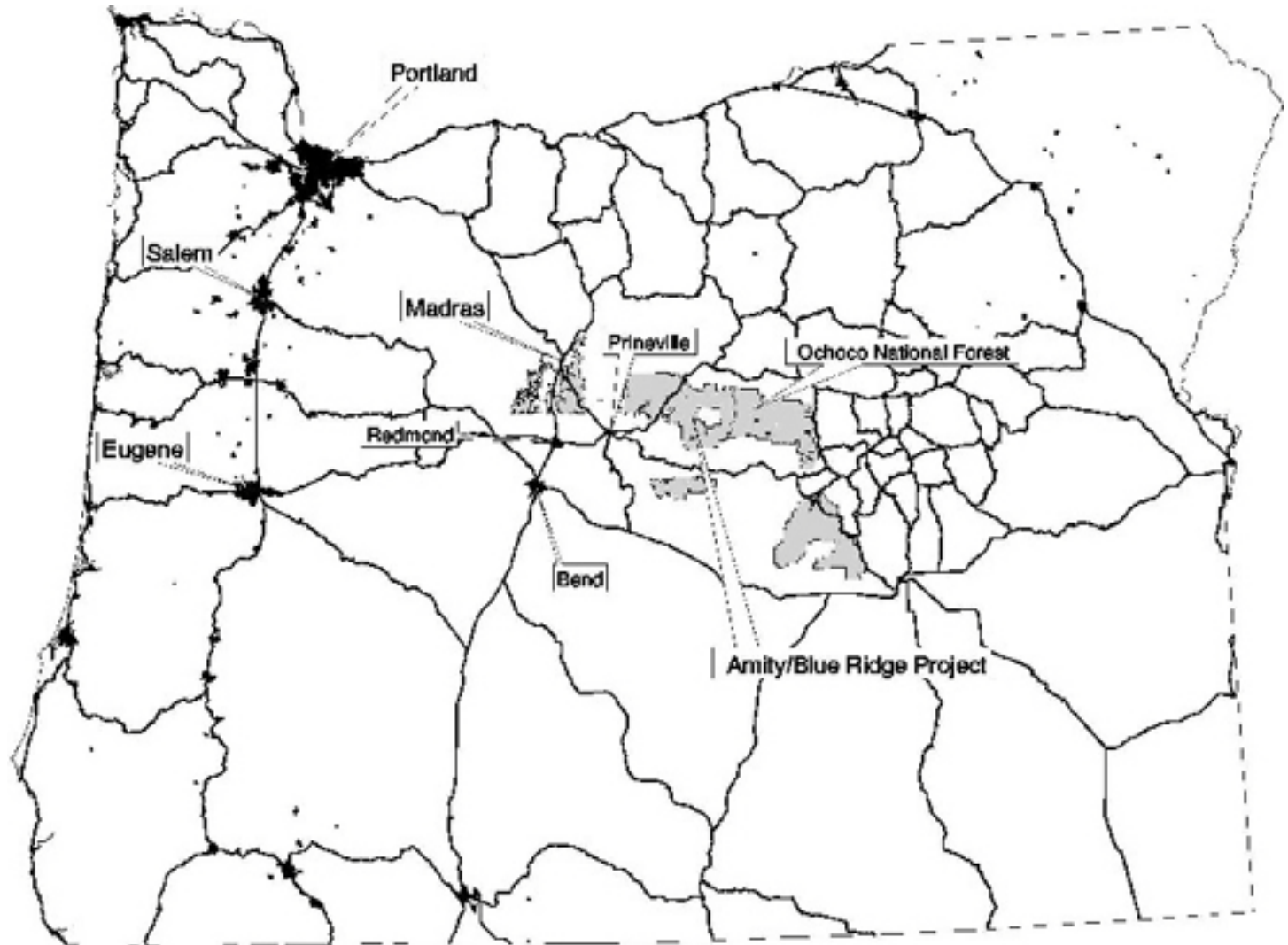
The primary sources of contamination at the Amity Mine Site are:

- The mine waste with associated seep; and
- The historic ore processing activities which occurred between 1929 and 1958.

The primary contaminants of concern associated with these sources are arsenic and mercury. Other human health and ecological contaminants of concern or interest include antimony, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, copper, iron, lead, manganese, nickel, selenium, and zinc.

Secondary sources of contamination include the mercury-enriched mine seeps; contaminated soils adjacent to the various ore processing sites (mill sites); and mercury remaining in the mill buildings, process equipment, and related debris. Contaminants at the site have the potential to affect humans (hikers and campers) and terrestrial and aquatic organisms (Martin et al., 1998).

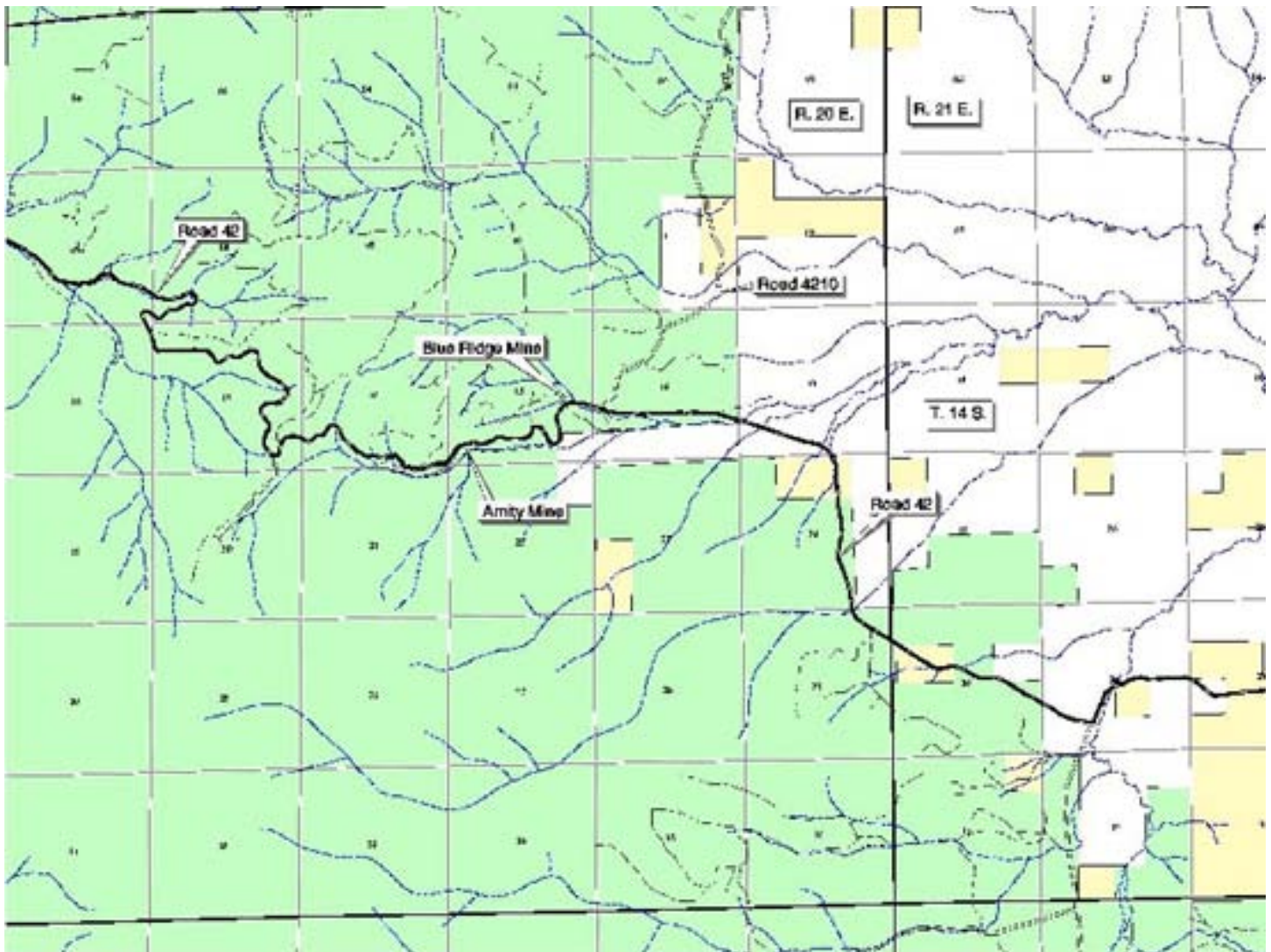
#### VICINITY MAP



Location of Site within State and Surrounding Geographic Landmarks

Figure 1: Location of Site within State and Surrounding Geographic Landmarks

#### LOCATION MAP



Location of Site within the Ochoco National Forest and Surrounding Geographic Landmarks

Figure 2: Location of Site within the Ochoco National Forest and Surrounding Geographic Landmarks

### III. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

#### A. Community Profile

The City of Prineville, with a U.S. Census population of 8,150 in 2002 and an "urban area" population of approximately 11,600, was incorporated in 1880. The City is the only incorporated city within Crook County, and is the county seat. Prineville is located in the approximate geographical center of Oregon in the Crooked River--Ochoco Creek valley areas (Brown, 1999).

The Ochoco National Forest is part of the former Blue Mountain Forest Reserve established in 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt and divided into east and west units. The Reserve was too large to effectively administer as one Forest. On July 1, 1908, four National Forests were formed by Executive Order. These were the Deschutes, Malheur, Whitman, and Umatilla. In 1911, the Ochoco National Forest was created by combining parts of the Deschutes and Malheur Forests.

The Prineville area is one of the few places in the United States that was settled by migrants who were moving "east". Travelers over the Oregon Trail first pushed over the Cascades to locate in the Willamette Valley. As the Valley filled up, however, a few settlers, feeling the area was becoming too crowded, drove their herds back over the Cascades to the Prineville/Crook County area. The first pioneer settlement in the area occurred in the fall of 1867 when a party from the Willamette Valley settled on Mill Creek.

For the first 50 years of the area's history, the raising of livestock was the only widespread industry. Ranching remains a major industry today. Irrigation projects associated with the Ochoco and Prineville Reservoirs in the early 1920s and 1960s respectively helped the agricultural industry diversify into the production of cash crops such as mint, potatoes, alfalfa, grass and carrot seed, garlic, sugar beets, and other speciality crops.

While the first sawmill in the area was built on Mill Creek in 1872, the timber industry boom did not get underway until about 1935. The wood products industry that grew out of the early logging and primary lumber manufacturing, however, has been the most important industry in terms of employment and income production during most of the 20th century. Other large employers in the community include the Les Schwab Tire Company and the federal government. Recreation-tourism is also important to the area's economy (Brown, 1999).

The discovery of gold in 1871 attracted many people to the area. However, the commercial gold mining activity lasted only a short time. Several cinnabar mines were in operation in the first half of the 20th century, with the bulk of the activity occurring between the 1920s and 1940s. Mining is a minor part of the area's economy today.

Several Prineville residents interviewed for this plan recalled the days when their relatives or neighbors worked in the local cinnabar mines. One resident related, "During the Depression, people couldn't find jobs, so they decided to mine. People were digging holes all over the hills, including on Lookout Mountain," where the Blue Ridge and Amity mines are located.

In general, the Prineville community reflects a "rural" agricultural atmosphere, somewhat insulated from the rapid development of the Bend-Redmond area. The population of Crook County is projected to grow from the current 19,600 (2000 census) to 35,000 by the year 2023 (Oregon Employment Department). Judging from individuals interviewed for this plan, many community members have been long-time residents in the area, and the community's small population has meant that local officials know, and are known by, most of the area's residents.

Senior citizens (age 65 and older) make up 23.7% of the population of Crook County. An additional 9.7% of the population is between ages 55-64 (Oregon Employment Department). The local Senior Center is a central meeting place in the area. Public meetings are held there weekly to discuss issues affecting the local community. A variety of local officials attend the meetings. County government includes a judge and two commissioners, while the city has a mayoral system of government.

#### B. Chronology of Community Involvement

To date, no contact has been initiated with the community leaders, that has been documented. A copy of the site investigation, which includes vicinity maps and site maps; and the Amity/Blue Ridge Initiation of CERCLA Investigation Memorandum is available for review at [www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon). (Click on "In the Spotlight").

The legal notice of the CERCLA initiation was published in the Bulletin on 10/30/02 and in the Central Oregonian on 11/1/02.

A series of articles have been published in The Bulletin and Central Oregonian on mercury mining and the Motherlode CERCLA remediation action from 1999 to present. Letters have been sent to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Burns Paiute Tribe for their comment in January, 2003.

#### C. Key Community Concerns

Community concern about mercury contamination at the Blue Ridge and Amity are low, possibly because:

Citizens have known that the Blue Ridge and Amity were mercury mines for a long period of time.

Most people don't feel that mercury contamination at the Blue Ridge and Amity Mines has any direct effect on them.

The presence of quicksilver mines is a colorful part of the community's history. The Crook County Historical Society organizes field trips to the old cinnabar mines (Crook County Historical Society, 1991). The Chamber of Commerce receives inquiries from interested members of the public who want to go and see the mines.

Some people in the community have a personal connection to the mines. Although there was some early exploration for gold, most of the old mines in the area are quicksilver mines. Many people in the community have older relatives who have worked in the mines or know someone whose family member did. Small communities sprang up at several of the larger mines. Families lived there.

The continuing low level of community concern about the Blue Ridge and Amity mines should not be construed as indifference to environmental hazards. A good portion of the community doesn't view the mine as a hazard. There is a sentiment that mercury is naturally-occurring in the cinnabar in the area and has always been here. Some citizens are skeptical of the need to spend a lot of money cleaning up the site.

Recent events should serve to raise the level of awareness, and perhaps interest, in the community. These include a series of articles published on mercury mining, the clean-up results for the Motherlode Mine and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's interest in cleaning up local abandoned mines (The Bulletin, Thursday, March 13, 2003). The Central Oregonian published an article on proposed legislation for mercury mine inventory and clean-up on March 18, 2003.

#### IV. HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRAM

The community relations program for the Blue Ridge and Amity mine sites should be designed to allow the community to learn about and participate in the remedial process, without disrupting the community's confidence that the site poses no new or immediate hazards. To be effective, the community relations program must be gauged according to the community's need for information, and its interest and willingness to participate in the remedial process.

The community relations program at the Blue Ridge and Amity mine sites should take the following approaches:

Enlist the support and participation of local officials in coordinating community relations activities.

Appropriate officials to involve in a community relations program include the Prineville Mayor, the Crook County Judge, and the Director of the Crook County Environmental Health Department. These officials are visible and trusted leaders in the community, and are therefore a valuable resource in the effort to understand and monitor community concern. To gain the support of local officials, inform them regularly and fully of site activities, plans, findings, and developments.

Provide explanations about sampling and test results and any decisions and actions taking place regarding the site. Concise and easily understood information should be available to all residents on the schedule of technical activities, their purpose, and their outcome. If some information cannot be released to the public, explain clearly and simply why the information must be withheld. Public Affairs staff should also, however, attempt to identify special situations or concerns where more specialized information may be required, or where certain types of information are needed by single individuals or groups. Finally, to ensure that inquiries from the community are handled efficiently and consistently, a single contact (Public Affairs, Ochoco National Forest) should be established for the site.

Educate area residents and local officials about the need for the clean up and how it is being paid for. To dispel some of the current confusion about why there is a need to clean up mercury, since it occurs in the area naturally, make an effort to circulate basic information to the community about why the contaminants at the mine site are different from the mercury naturally present in the cinnabar in the area. The financial aspects of the process also need to be clearly communicated to the community.

Let the people "set the pace" for the community relations program. Be aware that federal involvement in local issues is not always well-regarded by townspeople. Federal, and even State, programs are seen as excessively bureaucratic and insensitive to the realities of local government budgets and planning. Therefore, do not "overdo" or overplan community relations activities in a way that might discourage community participation. There is little interest in



attending public meetings. Scheduling a public meeting to invite comment on the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis would be appropriate for this community. Newspaper (including the Central Oregonian and Bulletin) and radio coverage should be effective ways of communicating with the community, unless a highly controversial issue emerges. Periodic in-person updates at community gatherings would be appropriate. Most local officials and community leaders attend these meetings.

## V. TECHNIQUES AND TIMING

The following activities are needed for the Blue Ridge and Amity mine sites community relations program.

A public comment period on the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) report addressing contamination at the site. A 30-day comment period will be held to allow citizens to express their opinions on the EE/CA recommendations for remedial action at the Blue Ridge and Amity Mines. A public notice about the comment period will be published in both the Bend Bulletin and the Prineville Central Oregonian newspapers. These notices will encourage community input by informing citizens that opportunity for public review and comment is being given before a final decision is made on the remedial actions.

Preparation of responsiveness summary. This document will summarize public concerns and issues raised during the comment period on the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis. In addition, the responsiveness summary documents responses made by the USDA Forest Service to these concerns.

Revision of Community Relations Plan. Once the decision has been made for the Blue Ridge and Amity Mines, this community relations plan should be revised, as needed, to outline community relations activities appropriate to the remediation phase.

In addition to these basic features of a community relations program for the Blue Ridge and Amity Mine sites, a number of activities will be undertaken to ensure that the community is well informed about site activities and has the opportunity to express its concerns. Activities, and their approximate timing, are as follows:

Establish and maintain information repositories: Fact sheets, technical summaries, site reports, and the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis are being placed in the information repositories. Information repositories are located at the Prineville Public Library and the Ochoco National Forest Headquarters Office in Prineville.

Establish an information contact: The public affairs staff person for the Ochoco National Forest will be responsible to respond directly to public inquiries regarding site activities.

Meet with local officials and telephone them periodically. Meetings with local officials should be held at the following technical milestones:

- Completion of the final work plan;
- Before remedial action starts.

Prepare and release fact sheets and technical summaries: Explaining the findings of the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis and outlining the remedial alternatives considered for the Blue Ridge and Amity Mine sites. Another fact sheet might be released once a decision has been made on removal actions. Public comment period will be 30 days.

Provide news releases to local media: Prepared statements can be released to local papers, such as the Central Oregonian and The Bulletin, and to local radio and television stations to notify the community of any public meetings or to inform citizens of any decisions or actions at the site.

Depending on the interest generated from the comment period: A public meeting may be held during the public comment period which will provide an opportunity for the Forest Service to answer questions directly and to discuss the recommended remedial alternative. This will be scheduled once the final Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis alternative has been selected.

## REFERENCES

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Oregon Health Division. 1999. Telephone conversation with Ken Kaufman, May 3, 1999.

## APPENDIX A -- LIST OF CONTACTS

### A. Federal Elected Officials

Senator Gordon Smith  
131 NW Hawthorne, Suite 208  
Bend, OR 97701  
susan\_fitch@gsmith.senate.gov  
(541) 318-1298  
(503) 326-3386

Senator Ron Wyden  
131 NW Hawthorne, Suite 107  
Bend, OR 97701  
(541) 330-9142

Congressman Greg Walden  
131 NW Hawthorne, Suite 211  
Bend, OR 97701  
colby.marshall@mail.house.gov  
(541) 389-4408

#### B. Tribal Officials

Burns Paiute Tribe  
Beth Coahran  
Cultural Resources  
HC 71, 100 Pasigo Street  
Burns, OR 97720  
(541) 573-2088

The Confederated Tribe of Warm Springs  
Robert A. Brunoe  
Natural Resources General Manager  
PO Box C  
Warm Springs, OR 97761-3001  
bbrunoe@wstribe.org  
(541) 553-2015

#### C. State Elected Officials

Governor Ted Kulongoski  
254 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97310-0370  
(503) 378-3548  
1-800-322-6345

Representative George Gilman (District 55)  
State Capitol, Room 269 (503) 548-1215  
Salem, OR 97310  
(503) 986-1200

#### C. Local Officials

Hon. Scott Cooper, Crook County Judge  
Courthouse  
300 E. 3rd St.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-6555

Mike Mohan, Crook County Commissioner  
Courthouse  
300 E. 3rd St.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-6555

Mike McCabe, Crook County Commissioner  
Courthouse  
300 E. 3rd St.

Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-6555

Steve Uffleman, Prineville Mayor  
Courthouse  
300 E. 3rd St.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-5627

#### D. State and Local Agencies

John Dadoly  
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality  
Eastern Region  
700SE Emigrant St., Suite 330  
Pendleton, OR 97801  
(541) 278-4616

Ken Kauffman  
Oregon Health Division  
800 NE Oregon St. #21  
Portland, OR 97232-2162  
(503) 731-4015

Russell Hanson, Director  
Crook County Environmental Health Department  
300 E. Third St.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-8155

Richard Breese  
Crook County Soil & Water Conservation District  
498 SE Lynn Blvd.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-3548

Jason Dedrick  
Crook County Watershed Council  
498 SE Lynn Blvd.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-3548

#### E. Community Organizations, Environmental Groups, and Citizens' Groups

Diane Bohle  
Crook County Chamber of Commerce  
390 N. Fairview St.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-6304

Crook County Historical Society  
246 N. Main St.  
Prineville, OR 97754

(541) 447-3715

#### F. Media

Vance Tong  
Central Oregonian  
558 N. Main St.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-6205

Rachel Odell  
Bend Bulletin  
1526 NW Hill St.  
Bend, OR 97701  
(541) 382-1811

Rick Meyers  
KTVZ  
P.O. Box 149  
Bend, OR 97709  
(541) 383-2121

R. L. Garrigus  
KICE Radio  
P.O. Box 751  
Bend, OR 97709  
(541) 388-3300

Bryan Williams  
KRCO Radio  
P.O. Box K  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-6239

Jeff Mullins  
KLRR Radio  
P.O. Box 5037  
Bend, OR 97708  
(541) 382-5263

#### APPENDIX B -- LOCATIONS FOR INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

Ochoco National Forest Headquarters Office  
3160 NE 3rd St.  
P.O. Box 490  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 416-6500

Prineville Public Library  
200 E. 2nd St.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 447-7978

## APPENDIX C -- NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

### Forest Service Invite Public Comment on Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis for the Blue Ridge and Amity Mines

The US Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service) have released an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) to address contamination at the Blue Ridge and Amity Mine sites on the Lookout Mountain Ranger District of the Ochoco National Forest. The EE/CA analyzes removal actions available to deal with contaminated soil and buildings. The primary contaminate of concern is mercury.

The goals of the EE/CA are to treat soils exceeding the risk-based cleanup target level; remove and dispose of building material containing mercury and asbestos; excavate and disposal of diesel contaminated soil; and protect the present and future public safety, welfare and the environment.

The EE/CA evaluated five alternatives for dealing with mercury contaminated soil on the Blue Ridge and Amity Mine sites: (1) no action; (2) institutional controls; (3) excavation and on-site containment; (4) excavation, treatment & on-site containment; and (5) excavation and off-site disposal. Removal actions considered for building materials and process equipment on Blue Ridge and Amity mines were: (1) no action; (2) demolition and off-site disposal.

The EE/CA recommends the following actions:

#### AREA RECOMMENDED ACTION

Soils Containing Mercury Concentrations Over 500 Mg/Kg

Building Materials And Process Equipment

Other Measures

Mine seeps, surface water & shallow groundwater

Mercury-contaminated sediment in Winter Creek and Johnson Creek below the mine site. Further study is needed to determine the source of methyl mercury in Winter Creek and Johnson Creek sediments.

The EE/CA and the supporting administrative record on which it is based are available for public review during regular business hours at the Ochoco National Forest Headquarters Office in Prineville (3160 NE 3rd) and the Prineville Public Library (200 E 2d). For additional information, contact Dennis Boles, Forest Service On-scene Coordinator, at (541) 273-1195.

Forest Service are providing an opportunity for public review and comment before making a final decision on the removal actions. A public meeting to answer questions and receive verbal comments is scheduled on (To be determined) in the Large Conference room of the Ochoco National Forest Headquarters Office in Prineville (3160 NE 3rd). Written comments may be submitted to Carrie Gordon, Ochoco NF, PO Box 490, Prineville, OR 97754. Written comments should be post marked by (To be determined). Upon timely receipt of a request, the comment period will be extended 15 calendar days.

#### Public Affairs Contact

Virginia Gibbons 541/416-6647